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# Russia Turns East

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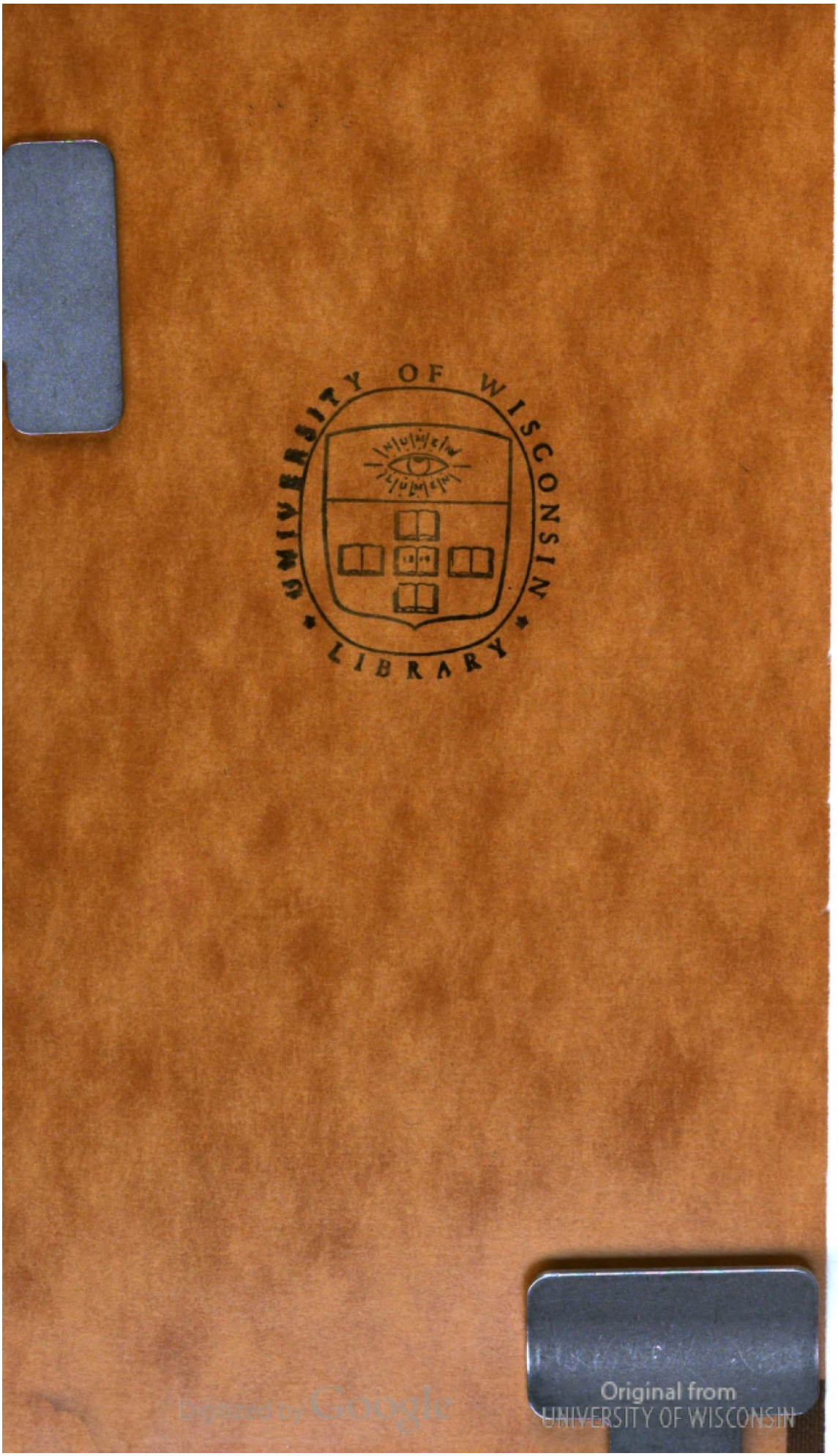


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# RUSSIA TURNS EAST

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# RUSSIA TURNS EAST

## The Triumph of Soviet Diplomacy in Asia

by

**SCOTT NEARING**

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# RUSSIA TURNS EAST


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# RUSSIA TURNS EAST

## 1. The Russian Revolution Threatens Imperialism

Imperial statesmen expected that after the defeat of Germany and the signing of the Peace Treaty in 1919, the Powers would be able to go on with "profiteering as usual." They reckoned without the Russian Revolution.

The Russian Revolution was dominated by two ideas: (1) the abolition of exploitation, and (2) self-determination for all peoples. These ideas blazed across the war-weary countries of Europe and quickly penetrated the subjugated portions of Asia and Northern Africa with the promise of peace, freedom from exploitation, and an end of the oppression of one people by another. President Wilson paraphrased them in his Fourteen Points. For the moment they were the war objectives of the Allied peoples.

Seasoned imperial statesmen were not deceived by such phrases. They knew that capitalist imperialism rested on exploitation and the domination of weak peoples by strong ones. As the revolutionary wave spread beyond Russia into Germany, Hungary and Italy, they recognized it as a far greater peril than German imperial aggression. For them and their spokesmen the Red Menace replaced the German Menace as the chief "enemy of civilization." It has occupied the centre of the stage from 1918 down to the present day, and must continue to focus imperial attention so long as it threatens to destroy the foundations on which imperialism rests.

## 2. Imperialism Attacks the Russian Revolution

There was but one possible course for the imperialists to follow — they must destroy the Red Menace as they had destroyed the German Menace. Their plans were carefully laid and well executed.

Imperialism launched its first attack on the Russian Revolution in 1918, when a blockade of Russia was organized and so strictly maintained that even medicines, disinfectants, and milk for children were excluded from the country. Then, by the Treaty of Versailles, a series of border states was created, stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea—the *cordon sanitaire*



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of French diplomacy—designed to keep Bolshevism bottled up in Russia until it was starved into submission. At the same time a military attack was made by the Allies on the Soviet Republic, both by direct invasion and, indirectly, by the generous support given to Denikin, Kolchak, Wrangle, and other counter-revolutionists, and to the Poles during the War of 1920. Finally, a campaign of anti-Soviet propaganda, world wide in scale, was launched, chiefly through the press.

From the earliest days of the Russian Revolution two policies were in conflict. One was based on the hope that capitalism would be overthrown speedily by a world revolution. The other grew out of the necessity for commercial and economic relations with the industrial nations of the West. If the world revolution had followed immediately on the heels of the Russian Revolution the problem would have solved itself. But the world revolution tarried, and the Soviet authorities were in dire need of engines, tractors, cotton, and other materials that they must import from some capitalist nation.

The earliest moves of the Soviet authorities looked toward the re-establishment of trade relations on a basis that would permit Russia to export raw materials and to receive machinery and other needed articles in return. At the outset, however, these efforts were blocked by the demands of the Bolsheviks for a speedy peace conference, and by the attitude of the Soviet Government toward capital and toward foreign debts.

The efforts of the Soviet Government to bring about an early peace conference met the demands of the Russian people. To the Allies, however, and particularly to the French, these efforts meant a compromise peace with an undefeated Germany.

Basic causes of conflict between the Allies and the Soviet authorities grew out of the Soviet attitude toward the socialization of natural resources, and the repudiation of the Russian loans, held so largely by the French. A decree of February 8, 1918, read:

> "1. All loans contracted by former Russian Governments . . . are cancelled as from Dec. 1, 1917. The December coupons will not be paid.
>
> "2. All the guarantees for these loans are cancelled.



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"3. All loans made from abroad are cancelled without exception and unconditionally."*

Such decrees were the tocsin of world revolution. Allied statesmanship, on the other hand, was seeking to re-establish the "law and order" of European imperialism.

The Allies and the representatives of the Soviets were talking a different language. Sources of conflict multiplied. The Allies had established great depots at Archangel, Murmansk, and Vladivostok in order to supply Tsarist Russia with war materials. The Allies had advanced these materials on Russian Government loans. Since the Soviet authorities had repudiated these loans the Allies insisted that the materials were their property. British, French, and United States soldiers to the extent of about 12,000 were landed to protect the Murmansk and Archangel depots.† In April, 1918, Japanese troops occupied Vladivostok with the same stated purpose. Practically, however, the Allies were everywhere coming into conflict with the Soviets and giving their support to the former Russian landlords and capitalists. Thus the stage was set for a war against Soviet Russia by the great empires of the world.

But the peoples were war-weary. They demanded peace. Early in 1919 there was a proposal, sponsored by President Wilson and others, to hold a conference at Prinkipo, at which the various Russian factions could iron out their differences and come to an agreement with the Allies. The Bolsheviks accepted the offer. The other Russian factions refused to participate in the conference.

The Bullitt Mission, February 22, 1919, brought a definite offer from the Soviet authorities, but it was never laid before the treaty-makers.

The Allied military expeditions into Russia, having met with bitter hostility among the Russian people, and with discontent and mutiny among the soldiers engaged in them, the governments represented at Paris decided, in May and June, 1919, to support Admiral Kolchak, who was moving west through Siberia. At the same time General Denikin moved north from the Caucasus to form a junction with the Kolchak forces. Provided by the Allies

*A. L. P. Dennis, *The Foreign Policies of Soviet Russia*, New York, Dutton, 1924, p. 60.

†Dennis, supra, p. 65.



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with munitions and supplies, both expeditions enjoyed temporary success, but they could not hope to succeed in the long run, since the leaders in both camps "were at heart monarchists who could not reconcile themselves to the idea that the old days were gone forever."* The victories of Denikin were quite temporary and were made possible "largely by the supplies and munitions furnished by the British."†

The Soviet Union passed through a terrible period between 1918 and 1922. Shut off from the world, attacked by armies from without, torn from within by subsidized civil war, with production only a seventh of pre-war, overwhelmed by the unprecedented famine of 1921, uncounted thousands died on the battlefields, while millions perished from hunger, exposure, and preventable disease. Still the imperialists were not free from the Red Menace. On the contrary, Soviet Russia had a permanent place on the front page of the world's daily press. Tens of millions thought and talked of Russia, of the Russian Revolution, and of its meaning to the rest of the peoples.

## 3. Russia Turns East

The practical result of this series of moves on the part of the Allies was the exclusion of the Soviet Republic from the life of the West. Travel between the Soviet Republic and western nations was impossible. Commercial relations were destroyed. Mail was interrupted. The citizens of the Soviet Union had little idea of what was passing in the outside world, and the people in the imperial countries had an even less clear understanding of events in the Soviet Republic.

However great the apparent necessity and however strong the desire of the Soviet authorities to re-establish communication and economic relations with the empires of the West, the persistent refusal of diplomatic recognition forced them to turn east for the building of their power.

## 4. Economic Opportunities of the East

The East is an untapped reservoir of economic opportunities. Along the seacoast of Asia, Western machine civilization has made

*Dennis, p. 88.
†Dennis, p. 90.



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a slight impression, but most of the interior of Asia is untouched by Western culture. Nomadic tribes continue to migrate; Chinese and Indian villages maintain their primitive forms of organization; herding and agriculture are the chief occupations; labor-saving machinery is practically unknown.

British, German and American coal fields and iron deposits are already more or less depleted. The coal of the Don basin, the oil of the Caucasus, the iron of the Urals, and the unmeasured mineral resources of Central and Eastern Asia are practically untouched.

The East is more than a reservoir of raw materials: it contains immense stores of human energy and a vast undeveloped purchasing power.

Nearly one-half the population of the world lives in Asia. China alone, with its more than 400 millions contains over one-fifth of the human race. In China and India together there are perhaps 750 millions out of the world population of 1,800 millions.

Looked at from the standpoint of resources and raw materials, of labor power, or of potential markets, Asia promises great things. Perhaps it is not too much to say that the development of Asia will determine the direction of world history during the next century. When Russia started east she entered this economic treasure-house.

## 5. The Social Life of the East

Social life in Central Asia, India and China is quite different from that in the West. Western industrialism has produced an extreme form of individualism. Asia still lives the life of the tribe, the family, and the village community. Instead of being ardent individuals bent on the acquisition of personal wealth and power, they conform to the habitual life of the tribe or of the village. The social group is supreme. The individual lives his life most acceptably when he advances, not his own interest, but the interest of the group.

An Indian village in the delta of the Ganges is not really a village in the Western sense of the term, but merely a collection



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of households, each one carrying on an independent economic and social existence.

Such a group of households is very frequently without a market, without a church, without a common amusement centre, without any other social meeting place. But within each household there is a complete social and economic organization. The individual is a member of this group first and an individual afterward.* Villages in Eastern Russia, in Siberia, and in China, while differing in the detail of their organization, present a similar social picture. They are essentially co-operative.

Whether the portions of the land are owned in common or whether some similar social tie exists, the village unit is larger than the family. For the most part, however, throughout the Far East family ties in some form—the tribe, the clan, the household—predominate.†

Some day, no doubt, Western economic and social methods will have penetrated Asia. Meanwhile the economic and social life of the continent has changed very little during the European industrial revolution.

Western individualists resent the Soviet idea because it comes into direct conflict with their social experience. The members of Eastern clans, tribes, and households find nothing incongruous in the Soviet idea, since their experiences are primarily communal and not primarily individual.

The social experience of the East is communistic. The doctrines of communism, therefore, find a congenial reception among many of the Eastern peoples.

## 6. Eastern Political Contact with the West

For more than a century the peoples of Asia have been looked upon as inferior by European imperialists. While Russia and Britain have been the chief aggressors, Germany, France, and even the United States have not hesitated to press their economic claims and to insist upon political measures which economic claims involved.‡

*J. C. Jack, *The Economic Life of a Bengal District*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1916, pp. 1-40.

†B. H. Baden-Powell, *The Indian Village Community*, London, Longmans, 1896, p. 166 ff.

‡T. W. Overlach, *Foreign and Financial Control in China*, New York, Macmillan, 1919.



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The division of Persia is a case in point. The Anglo-Russian agreement of August 31,1907, divided Persia into three parts : the northern part, including the capital Teheran, was a Russian preserve; in the centre there was a neutral zone; to the south was a British sphere of influence. Theoretically, Persia was an independent and sovereign state. Practically, Persia became a bone of contention, over which Russian and British imperialists struggled. The preamble to the agreement states that Britain and Russia are "desirous of avoiding all cause of conflict between their respective interests." The agreement resulted in "a large Russian and a small British sphere of influence, with a neutral zone in which the two countries were to have equal opportunities."*

India's fate was settled during the eighteenth century, when France was eliminated and the British Empire began its long career of Indian exploitation, in the course of which vast sums of wealth, produced and owned in India, passed into the hands of British capitalists. Through this period a few Englishmen became rich, while India's hundreds of millions lived, and still live, on the verge of starvation.†

China has had many a bitter experience with Western imperialism, but none more humiliating than that involved in the two opium wars.‡ In the course of these wars the British Empire not only forced the Chinese Government to permit the importation of opium into China but it compelled the Chinese to open their ports to Western trade, to grant concessions, and to accept treaties under which foreign governments made and executed their own laws in the settlements which they set up in various Chinese cities.

A typical agreement for the division of Chinese spoils was signed by Japan and Russia July 3, 1916. Its declared purpose is for "the maintenance of a permanent peace in the Far East." Really it is a joint undertaking for the exploitation of China.§ In like manner, the British, French, Russian, and Italian im-

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*G. P. Gooch, *History of Modern Europe,* London, Cassell, 1923, p. 393.

†Lajpat Rai, *England's Debt to India,* New York, Huebsch, 1917, especially Parts II, IV, and V.

‡Ellen La Motte, *The Opium Monopoly,* New York, Macmillan, 1920, ch. XV, "History of the Opium Trade in China."

§J. V. A. MacMurray, *Treaties and Agreements with and Concerning China,* v. II, pp. 1327-8.



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perial governments, early in 1917, gave their approval to the proposal of Japan to take over the German claims in China, particularly in Shantung.*

Add to these elements of Western aggression the picture of a Japan over-populated, highly developed industrially, sparsely supplied with basic economic resources, and eager to secure both the resources and markets of Continental Asia and the picture of the political situation in the Far East is complete. The weaker nations of Asia have behind them generations of bitter oppression and exploitation by Western capitalist imperialism. The one great capitalist empire of the East—Japan—has no choice but to struggle for the control of the economic advantages of Asia.

## 7. The Russian Revolution

From its infancy the Russian Revolution denounced every form of imperialism, including that formerly practised by the Russian Empire. While it was exhausting every possibility of co-operation with nations of the West it was laying the foundations of its Far Eastern policy. When it became apparent that the Western blockade would be indefinitely continued, and that capitalist hostility was a permanent fact, Russia turned east because the East offered the only possible path of development for Soviet enterprise and diplomacy.

The Soviet Republic turned to an East of vast resources, of communal traditions, with its bitter experience of Western imperial aggression. She turned with three simple propositions: (1) that all forms of Russian imperial aggression should cease; (2) that each national or racial group formerly within the Russian Empire should enjoy the right of self-determination; (3) that these self-determining units of Eastern Europe and of Asia had but one possible means of protection—solidarity and co-operation in their resistance to Western imperial aggression.

This declared policy of the Soviet Republic was more than a political theory. She established it in her dealings with Turkey, with the Trans-Caucasian Republics, with Afghanistan, with Persia. Soviet-Persian relations are a model of the new form of political understanding which the Soviet Republic was seeking to establish among her Far Eastern neighbors.

*Thomas F. Millard, *Conflict of Policies in Asia*, New York, Century, 1924, pp. 57-63.



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During the World War Persian sovereignty was violated by the belligerents on both sides. Persian nationalists looked to the Russian Revolution as a solitary hope in their unequal struggle against European imperialism. The Soviet authorities did every thing in their power to encourage this hope. Their efforts culminated in a decree published in *Izvestia,* January 16, 1918, in which all Russian claims in Persia infringing on the rights of Persian sovereignty were abrogated and a promise was made to have Persia cleared of Turkish and British troops. Soviet relations with Persia for the future were to be "based upon a free agreement and mutual respect among nations."*

Persian nationalists attempted to raise at the Paris Peace Conference the question of the withdrawal of allied troops from Persian territory. Nothing came of this effort, however, and on August 9, 1919, a new Anglo-Persian agreement was drawn up.† This agreement continued and extended British domination over Persia. Meanwhile, however, the Persian nationalists had called together a National Parliament, and no popular assembly elected in Persia could be expected to validate such an agreement as that prepared by the British imperialists.

Unrest developed. Persian nationalism insisted upon its right to self-determination. In January, 1921, the British withdrew their forces; in February a revolution took place at Teheran at the same time that a treaty was signed with Soviet Russia.‡

Soviet relations with Trans-Caucasia, with Turkey, with Afghanistan, and with other Near Eastern peoples might be cited to confirm the general theory of social relationships set forth in the transactions between the Soviet Government and Persia. Enough has been said, however, to indicate the character of these relationships and to point conclusively to the fact that a new social order was establishing itself in Eurasia and was deliberately bringing pressure to bear for the overthrow of capitalism, the destruction of imperialism, and the establishment of social relations on a basis of reciprocity rather than of exploitation. The militant phrases of Zinoviev, at the meeting of the

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*A. L. P. Dennis, *The Foreign Policies of Soviet Russia,* p. 238.

†*International Conciliation,* No. 145, Dec., 1919, "Parliamentary White Papers," Persia, No. 1, 1919.

‡Dennis, pp. 240-241.



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First Congress of the Nations of the Orient, voiced the promise of Eastern freedom through Eastern co-operation:

> "Now, however, having for the first time met in a Congress of the Nations of the Orient, you must proclaim a real, holy war against these robbers, the Anglo-French capitalists. . . . The hour has struck when the workers of the entire world will be able to arouse and bring into motion tens and hundreds of millions of peasants, when they will be able in the Orient, too, to create a Red Army, will be able to arm themselves, will be able to organize insurrection in the rear of the English, will be able to throw the firebrands among these robbers, will be able to make life miserable to every brazen-faced British officer lording it in Turkey, Persia, India, and China. . . . The Communist Internationale today addresses itself to the nations of the Orient and says to them: 'Brothers! We call you, first of all, to a holy war against British imperialism.' "*

## 8. Russian Major Strategy in the East

Economic and social opportunities in Asia and the pressing necessity for some escape from the Western blockade led the Soviet Republic to formulate the major strategy of its Eastern policy along three general lines: (1) establishing intimate relations with Persia, Turkey, and Afghanistan and thus cutting the British Empire in two by severing connections between Egypt and India; (2) winning China; (3) buying out Japan by granting economic concessions which she could not afford to refuse.

The conception of these policies involved a statesmanship which visioned as its objective an economic and social unit stretching from the Baltic on the west to the Pacific on the east. The fulfillment of such a program necessitated a series of negotiations the ultimate object of which was the exclusion of Western imperialist nations from participation in economic and social advantages of the Eurasian Soviet unit.

## 9. Consolidating the Near East

With the occupation of Arabia, the assumption of control over Persia and Egypt, the mandates over Mesopotamia, and the

*Speech by Zinoviev, in *Stenographic Records of the First Congress of the Nations of the Orient at Baku, Sept.* 1, 1920, pp. 47-48. Quoted by Dennis, *The Foreign Policies of Soviet Russia*, p. 234.



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success of the British in the Caucasus, the British Empire has been so extended that British control existed over a range of territory running from the Cape of Good Hope to the Straits of Malacca. In the Near East, British operations centred about the oil fields. Prof. E. A. Ross writes : "In the spring of 1919 the British held the Caucasus, Transcaucasia, Transcaspia, and Turkestan, while Denikin's squadron manned by British seamen and marines controlled the Caspian Sea. High British political agents were beginning to talk of the Caucasus range as a northern defense boundary of the British Empire."*

From these vantage points the British shut down the Baku oil fields in order to deprive the Russians of their fuel supply. At the same time they prepared the Anglo-Persian agreement of August 9, 1919, under which Persia became a virtual part of the Empire.

Two years later this imposing imperial structure had fallen to pieces like a house of cards. Turkey was self-governing and was defying the Allies; Persia was a free nation; Afghanistan was independent, and the Caucasian oil fields were under Soviet control. The change was revolutionary. It was brought about almost exclusively by Soviet diplomacy and propaganda.

Tsarist Russia and Imperial Britain had been in open competition for the control of the Near East bloc — Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan. The Tsar was the policeman; the British Empire the trader. Between them they divided and despoiled. The Russian Revolution threw this whole machinery of exploitation completely out of gear. The policeman was off the job. Revolutionary and nationalist movements sprang up over night. The ideas of the Russian Revolution spread like fire. Out from behind the events of 1917-1919 stepped the Soviet Union as the champion of the Near East against Western aggression.

## 10. The Anti-Imperialist Treaties of 1921

During 1921 the Soviet Union signed four vitally important treaties: with Persia, February 26, 1921; with Afghanistan, February 28, 1921; with Bokhara, March 4, 1921; and with Turkey, March 16, 1921. These treaties gave a powerful backing to the demands for independent nationalism in Turkey, Persia, and

*E. A. Ross, *The Russian Soviet Republic*, New York, Century, 1923, p. 286.



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Afghanistan. They bolstered up Turkey in the Greek War and at the Lausanne Conference. They gave to the Near East a sense of solidarity that has not existed there during the period of capitalist exploitation.

The Soviet-Persian Treaty of February 26, 1921 (League of Nations Treaty Series, v. 9, 1922, No. 268), is entitled "Treaty of Friendship between Persia and the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic." Article One states that the Treaty aims to confirm Soviet declarations of friendship toward Persia and to definitely renounce "the tyrannical policy carried out by the colonizing governments of Russia." Following out this principle "and desiring that the Persian people should be happy and independent and should be able to dispose freely of its patrimony, the Russian Republic declares the whole body of treaties and conventions, concluded with Persia by the Tsarist Government, which crushed the rights of the Persian people, to be null and void."

Soviet policy toward Asia is summarized in Article Two, which reads as follows:

> "The R. S. F. S. R. expresses its reprobation of the policy of the Tsarist Governments of Russia, which, on the pretext of ensuring the independence of the peoples of Asia, concluded, without the consent of the latter, treaties with European powers, the sole object of which was to subjugate those peoples.
>
> "This criminal policy, which infringed upon the independence of the countries of Asia, and which made the *living* nations of the East a prey to the cupidity and the tyranny of European robbers, is abandoned unconditionally by Federal Russia.
>
> "Federal Russia, therefore, in accordance with the principles laid down in Articles One and Four of this Treaty, declares its refusal to participate in any action which might destroy or weaken Persian sovereignty. It regards as null and void the whole body of treaties and conventions concluded by the former Russian Government with third parties in respect of Persia or to the detriment of that country."

Succeeding articles contain various guarantees of neutrality. Article Six permits Russia to enter Persian territory with her military forces should Russia be unable to repel an armed invader threatening Russian territory.



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Under Article Eight the Soviet Government cancels the loans granted to Persia by the Tsarist Government. "Russia likewise renounces its claims to the resources of Persia which were specified as security for the loans in question." Similarly, the economic concessions and undertakings begun in Persia under the Tsarist Government are abandoned (Articles 9 and 10). "The Russian Federal Government restores to the Persian Government, as representing the Persian people, all the concessions in question, whether already being worked or not, together with all land taken over in virtue of these concessions" (Article 12). "The Persian Government, for its part, promises not to cede to a third Power, or to its subjects, the concessions and property restored to Persia by virtue of the present treaty, and to maintain those rights for the Persian nation" (Article 13).

The remaining articles of the treaty provide for various details in the working out of friendly relations between the two governments.

This treaty contains the language of a new diplomacy and of a new social order. It scores imperialism as bitterly as a Hyde Park radical; it renounces the practices of imperialism; it restores Tsarist advantages in Persia to the Persian people, and pledges the power of the Soviet Republic to preserve the Persians in their national rights.

The Turkish Treaty begins with the statement that it is drawn up between "the Russian Socialist Federated Republic and the Government of the Great National Assembly of Turkey, which adhere to the principles of brotherly relations between nations and self-determination of peoples, and which recognize the solidarity existing between them in the struggle against imperialism. . . ." (p. 109). Article One declares that any treaties or international agreements to which the contracting parties have been compelled to affix their signatures shall not be recognized. Article Four reads:

> "Both contracting parties recognize many points of contact between the movement for national liberation of the peoples of the East and the struggle of the working population of Russia for a new social order and solemnly proclaim the right of these peoples to liberty and independence as well as the right to



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**The Union of Socia**

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**ist Soviet Republics**

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choose a form of government that shall be in accordance with their wishes."*

The other treaties signed at the same period are written in the same tone of opposition to imperialism. The Treaty with Afghanistan, for example, states in Article Seven: "The High Contracting Parties agree upon the freedom of Eastern nations on the principle of independence and in accordance with the general wish of each nation."

Article Eight declares: "In confirmation of Clause 7 of the present treaty, the High Contracting Parties agree upon the actual independence and freedom of Bokhara and Khiva, whatever may be the form of their government, in accordance with the wish of their peoples." This article extends the right of self-determination beyond the immediate parties to two others who were not directly concerned in the agreement.

By way of further emphasis on the principle of self-determination (Clause IX), "Russia agrees to hand over to Afghanistan the frontier districts which belonged to her in the last century, observing the principle of justice and the free expression of the will of the people."†

The next clause of the Afghanistan Treaty provides that Russia shall give Afghanistan "financial and other help." The character of this help is specified in a supplementary clause.

The Russian Revolution had enunciated the principle of self-determination. The Soviet Republic put the principle into practice, won the support of large sections of the Near East, checkmated the plans of the European imperialists, and laid the foundations for a powerful Near East anti-imperial bloc.

## 11. Winning China

The chief objective of Soviet strategy in the East was not Turkey and Persia, but China. The treaties signed in 1921 gave the Soviet Union a southern bulwark against imperial aggression, and drove through the British Empire a diplomatic wedge that is a constant threat to British control in surging India. This provided defences for the line of communications, while it gave the Russians, rather than the British, the dominant position in the oil fields of the Near East.

**Soviet Russia,* Sept., 1921, p. 109.
†*Soviet Russia,* April 30, 1921, p. 427.



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There remained the immense resources of Northern Asia and the busy markets of Mongolia, Manchuria, and China. Coupled with the resources and populations of European Russia, these constitute probably the richest potential economic unit in the world.

For a century Russia has been moving across Siberia to the Pacific, colonizing Siberia, pressing upon Persia and Afghanistan, gnawing at China.

The treaty with China made in 1851 was chiefly concerned with the protection of the Mongolian caravan routes.* Two treaties were signed in 1858. The first fixed the Eastern frontiers between Russia and China greatly to the advantage of Russia. The second provided for the Russian commercial privileges.† These treaties gave Russia a free access to the Pacific, and opened North China markets to Russian trade. The Russian colonists "soon became thoroughly convinced of the enormous economic potentialities of this country, as well as of the wealth of its natural resources and of the advantages which they could derive from the exploitation of the North China markets."‡ "The offensive character of the Russian policy toward China can be explained by its chief object of securing the North China markets for the Russian merchants."§

A new treaty between Russia and China was signed in 1881¶ in which Russian economic rights in China were re-affirmed.

Japan took Port Arthur from China after the defeat of China in 1895. Li Hung Chang then began conversations with Russia looking to the protection of China against Japanese aggression, and was compelled to offer more privileges as pay.** Sergei J. Witte, Russian Minister of Finance, regarded the Far Eastern markets and resources as "a most profitable opening for the young Russian industry and a means of exploiting Siberia through the just completed cross-country railroad."†† In 1896, Russia and China signed three agreements, under which Russia

*E. Hertslet, *China Treaties*, Harrison and Sons, 3rd rev. ed., London, 1908, v. I, pp. 449 ff.
†*Ibid.*, pp. 454 and 455.
‡S. A. Korff, "Russia in the Near East," *American Journal International Law*, 1923, 17; p. 258.
§*Ibid.*, p. 259.
¶Hertslet, pp. 483 ff.
**Korff, supra, p. 260 ff.
††Korff, supra, p. 262.



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was to build two railroads: one straight across Manchuria to Vladivostok; the other to Port Arthur. This gave Russia two outlets to the Pacific and a sure grip on Manchuria.* Russia was looking definitely toward Korea.

In December, 1897, a Russian squadron occupied Port Arthur to protect China from the aggression of other powers. In 1898, Port Arthur was "leased" to Russia. The Chinese Eastern Railway agreement was signed July 6, 1898.†

Russia and Japan, after 1895, were face to face in militant conflict for the control of Korea and Manchuria. Russia was not content with Northern Manchuria and North China. She also wanted Korea and Southern Manchuria. After the Boxer uprisings of 1900 Japan decided to join the other powers and get what she could of the Chinese spoils. She must have an ally. The choice lay between England and Russia. She chose England, and signed the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Alliance, January 30, 1902.

A group of Russian adventurers secured a mining concession on the Yalu River and persuaded the Tsar and his family to invest. Japan tried to adjust the differences that arose over this imperialist venture, but the Russians felt sure of their ability to coerce Japan and pressed the issue recklessly. The Russo-Japanese War of 1905 was the result.‡

Following the war, England did her best to build up an alliance between Russia and Japan. In 1916 two treaties were signed between Japan and Russia, which practically provided for offensive and defensive alliance.§

Meanwhile, in the summer of 1911, the Mongolian rulers decided to turn against China. They were assisted by Russia. Russia signed a treaty with Mongolia in Urga, November 3, 1912, under which Russia received many privileges from Mongolia.¶

Thus were the foundations laid for the part which Russia was destined to play in the momentous events that followed one another in China after the outbreak of the 1911 Revolution.

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*Korff, supra, pp. 262-3.
†MacMurray, *Treaties,* v. I, p. 154.
‡Sergei J. Witte, *Memoirs,* New York, Doubleday, Page, 1921, p. 123.
§MacMurray, v. II, pp. 1327-8.
¶*Ibid.* v. II, pp. 992-6.



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## 12. Sharing the Chinese Eastern Railway

The Chinese Eastern Railway had been one of Russia's chief agencies for the exploitation of China. In 1924, when the diplomats of North China signed their treaty with the Soviet representatives, despite the bitter opposition of the Allies, it was provided that both Russia and China should manage the railroad. Article 4 abrogates all treaties and agreements "concluded between the former Tsarist Government and any third party or parties affecting the sovereign rights or interests of China." Under the treaty provisions the Chinese Eastern Railway is reorganized, with ten directors—five from the Soviet Union and five from China. "The manager of the railroad shall be a national of the U. S. S. R." Of the two assistant managers, one shall be Chinese and one Russian.* Paragraph 5 of Article 9 of the agreement asserts that "the governments of the two contracting parties mutually agree that the future of the Chinese Eastern Railway shall be determined by the Republic of China and the U. S. S. R. to the exclusion of any third party or parties."

The agreement with China was signed May 31,1924. When its terms became known the various Allied governments protested on the ground that they were interested parties and creditors in the Chinese Eastern.

The protest of the United States Government was based, in part, on the Thirteenth Resolution of the Washington Conference, which makes provision for the treatment of foreign creditors. China was not consulted in the drafting of this Resolution, and her reply to the United States note is a classic: "In the future the two governments of China and Russia will deal with the Chinese Eastern Railway, in which only the two countries of Russia and China are concerned."†

During a century the Chinese have been humbled before the great Western powers, who have come in, one after the other, to rob her of her economic heritage. In the Russian Treaty of 1924 China finds the basis for independent action because she is backed for the first time by real support from the West.

After the exchange of ratifications, the Soviet Union, on July

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*_Current History_, Sept., 1924, pp. 960-961. Treaty in full.

†New York _Times_, June 19, 1924, 23:6.



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15, 1924, appointed L. Karakhan Ambassador to China. Since the other Western nations had never sent representatives of ambassadorial rank to China, this stroke of diplomacy not only placed the Soviet Union and China on a footing of equality but made Karakhan the head of the foreign representatives in China. The resulting conflict is well described by Frederick Cunliffe-Owen in the New York Times.*

The policy which the Soviet Union pursued in its relations with China has been consistent throughout. In April, 1920, Tchitcherin declared that "the Soviet Government renounces all conquests made by the Government of the Tsar in China, Manchuria, or anywhere else. . . . The Soviet Government restores to China without any compensation whatever the mining, forest, and all other concessions of which China was robbed by the Government of the Tsar, the Government of Kerensky, of the brigands Horvath, Semenov, Kolchak, and Russian generals and capitalists."†

With these facts in mind it is easy to understand why the great Chinese liberator Sun-Yat-Sen should have relied so largely on Soviet help in the struggle to free China from the control of Western imperialists, and why he, and other leaders of the Kuo-Ming-Tang Party, should have taken the position indicated in his letter of March 11,1925, to the Central Executive Committee of the U. S. S. R.:

> "Dear Comrades,—While I lie here in a malady against which men are powerless, my thoughts are turned towards you and towards the fates of my Party and my country.
>
> "You are at the head of the union of free republics—that heritage left to the oppressed peoples of the world by the immortal Lenin. With the aid of that heritage the victims of Imperialism will inevitably achieve emancipation from that international régime whose foundations have been rooted for ages in slavery, wars, and injustice.
>
> "I leave behind me a Party which, as I always hoped, will be bound up with you in the historic work of the final liberation of China and other exploited countries from that imperialist order. By the will of fate I must leave my work unfinished,

*July 27, 1924, II, 2:2.

†E. A. Ross, *The Russian Soviet Republic*, New York, Century, 1923, p. 292.



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and hand it over to those who, remaining faithful to the principles and teaching of the Party, will thereby be my true followers.

"Therefore I charged the Kuo-Ming-Tang to continue the work of the revolutionary nationalist movement, so that China, reduced by the imperialists to the position of a semi-colonial country, should become free.

"With this object I have instructed the Party to be in constant contact with you. I firmly believe in the continuance of the support which you have hitherto accorded to my country.

"Taking my leave of you, dear comrades, I want to express the hope that the day will soon come when the U. S. S. R. will welcome a friend and ally in a mighty, free China, and that in the great struggle for the liberation of the oppressed peoples of the world both these allies will go forward to victory hand in hand.

"With fraternal greetings,

"SUN-YAT-SEN."*

## 13. Bargaining with Japan

Japan needs both the natural resources and the markets of Continental Asia. With an area less than that of California and a population of more than half the population of the United States, Japan is subject to continual economic pressure. She must import iron, fuel, cotton, and food. She must export enough goods to pay for these necessaries and to supply her powerful business class with an outlet for its surplus capital.

Strategically Japan is the guardian of Eastern Asia. Her string of 447 islands, stretching from Kamchatka on the north to Formosa on the south, gives her a commanding position over the whole of Northern Asia. The Japanese domination of Korea and the part played by Japan in the economic and political affairs of China increases the strength of this position.

Following her victory over Russia in 1905, Japan, with the assistance of England, negotiated a series of treaties with Russia in 1907, 1910, 1911, and 1916.† On their face, these treaties provided for reciprocal trade and diplomatic relations between

*Workers' Weekly*, March 27, 1925.

†MacMurray, *Treaties and Agreements with and Concerning China*, v. I, pp. 643, 646, 657, 803, 899, v. 2, pp. 1327-28; Dennis, p. 271.



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Russia and Japan. Practically they were the means of dividing the control over Northern China between the two great empires.

The Russian Revolution proved a rude shock to Japan's ambitions in Asia, because it introduced a revolutionary element wholly foreign to the interests of Japanese imperialism. So long as Japan and Russia were both conquering and exploiting they might divide the spoils, but when Russia abandoned imperialism and capitalism it left the Japanese Empire in an extremely difficult position. Japan wanted the resources and markets of Eastern Asia, but there was no one with whom she could agree as to their disposition.

There remained, of course, the possibility of Japan's taking them over for herself. She began this vigorously by presenting an ultimatum to China,* seizing Shantung, and in 1918 by landing troops at Vladivostok, and later by occupying Northern Sakhalin.† In the same year the Japanese organized a Siberian expeditionary force and gave generous support to Semenov and Kolchak.

This aggressive policy practised by Japan had two diverse but equally important results. On the one hand it strengthened the opposition of the peoples of Northern Asia to imperial aggression and turned them definitely toward the Soviet Union as their one means of salvation. On the other hand it aroused the bitter hostility of English and United States capitalists, who saw in this progress of Japanese imperialism the loss of their economic opportunities in Asia.

When the Anglo-Japanese agreement expired it was not renewed, partly, no doubt, because the British hesitated to strengthen Japan's hands and partly because of the very evident choice which Great Britain must make between friendship with Japan and friendship with the United States.

Even more emphatic than the failure of Britain to renew the Anglo-Japanese agreement was the ruthless Japanese exclusion policy adopted by the United States in 1924.

Japan had come none too willingly to the Washington Conference in 1922. At this conference English and United States

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*MacMurray, v. II, p. 1231, The Twenty-one Demands presented by Japan to China, Jan. 18, 1915.

†Dennis, chs. 11 and 12.



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diplomats worked together to limit the power of Japan in Asia. The Japanese, both at the Paris Peace Conference and at the Washington Conference, presented one major demand—equality with the Western powers. In both cases this demand was refused.

The scornful rejection of Japan by the United States in 1924 left Japan with two courses of action. The first was to play a lone hand in the control of Asia. This was a difficult and dangerous course for the Japanese to follow in view of the large interests of Britain, Russia, and the United States. The second course was to form an effective alliance with Russia, despite her unwelcome economic and social system. Japan chose this latter course, and on January 20, 1925, signed a treaty with Russia.*

The correspondence between Russia and Japan over the 1925 treaty is most revealing.† Karakhan, who conducted the negotiations on the side of Russia, continually emphasized the desire of Russia for reciprocal relations. On July 31, 1924, he gave an interview to the Japanese newspaper men, in which he said: "Japan imagines that by recognizing the Soviet Union it is making us a tremendous concession and placing us under great obligation." This is far from the truth, Karakhan argues. "Japan wishes to acquire the natural riches of Northern Sakhalin under conditions which only a victorious power may dictate to a vanquished nation. Our answer is that Japan has no claim to monopolies and exclusive rights but that she may obtain concessions on the general established basis. . . . The Soviet Union's policy is based upon the principle of full reciprocity, and we do not wish to recede from this principle. . . . We want an agreement with Japan, but we cannot make any sacrifice, just as we do not ask for any sacrifice on the part of Japan."‡

## 14. The Soviet-Japanese Treaty of 1925

The treaty of January 20, 1925, provides in Article Six that "in the interests of the development of economic relations between the two countries, and taking into consideration the needs of Japan with respect to natural resources, the Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics is ready to grant to Japanese subjects, companies and associations, concessions for the exploi-

*Text in *Izvestia*, February 27, New York *Times*, March 22, 1925.
†*Russian Review*, Dec. 15, 1924, pp. 232-3; Sept. 1, 1924, p. 95.
‡*Russian Review*, Sept. 1, 1924, p. 95.



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tation of mineral, timber, and other natural resources in all of the territory of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics."

Protocol B attached to the treaty deals with Japanese concessions in Northern Sakhalin. The Soviet Government agrees to grant to Japanese concerns recommended by the Japanese Government the right to carry on exploration work in certain oil fields of Northern Sakhalin for from five to 10 years. Should oil be discovered, the concession for the exploration of 50 per cent of the oil field area will be granted to the Japanese. The next section of the Protocol makes similar provisions for the development of Sakhalin coal. The period of the concessions is fixed at from 40 to 50 years. The Japanese concessionaires agree to turn over to the Soviet Union from 5 to 8 per cent of the gross coal output and from 5 to 45 per cent of the gross oil output. Certain limited privileges for timber development are also included in the Protocol. By the adoption of this treaty Japan secures some of the most important resources in Eastern Asia and the Soviet Union gains an ally whose strategic position in the Pacific protects her against aggression from that quarter. Russia, on the other hand, has made her position quite clear. Stalin, in an authorized interview with the correspondent of the Japanese *Nishi-Nishi,* answered this question: How can the Japanese people serve the cause of the liberation of the oppressed peoples of the East from the yoke of the Western powers? "There is but one way," Stalin answered. "The political and social order of Japan must be adapted to the fundamental interests of the Japanese people."*

## 15. Allied Statesmanship

Since 1919 the Soviet offensive in Asia has been developing. To date three of its important objectives have been attained. It has severed the British Empire through its consolidation of the Near East; it has gained a unique position in China; it has established an alliance with Japan which is extremely favorable to both parties. Thus the Soviet Union has made itself secure from the Baltic to the Pacific. Within the brief span of six years it has created an economic and political unit which generations of Tsarist diplomacy failed to establish. This astonishing result

*International Press Correspondence, July 23, 1925, v. 5, No. 59.



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has been brought about on the basis of two simple principles—self-determination and reciprocity.

During this period allied statesmanship either did not recognise the course events were taking or else it was impotent to meet them in any effective manner. The United States State Department continued its offensive against the Soviet Government but remained aloof from League activities. France pressed Germany to the limit of endurance; Great Britain hampered but failed to checkmate France. The occupation of the Ruhr and the exaction of heavy reparation demands, which culminated later in the inauguration of the Dawes Plan, left Germany but one choice: an effective alliance with Russia. Such an alliance was rendered even more desirable because Russia contained many of the raw materials needed by Germany, and Germany produced many of the manufactured products required by Russia. Thus, while the Allies were quarreling among themselves and were driving Germany to the wall economically, the Germans followed the path of least resistance, and on April 16, 1922, signed a treaty with Russia at Rapallo, under which both parties waive war claims; under which Germany waives the claims of German citizens arising out of the socialization of Russian industries (Art. 2); and under which diplomatic, commercial, and economic relations are resumed on the principle of the most favored nation. The most significant Article in the treaty is Article 5, which reads as follows:

> "The two governments shall co-operate in a spirit of mutual goodwill in meeting the economic needs of both countries. In the event of a fundamental settlement of the above question on an international basis, an exchange of opinions shall previously take place between the two governments. The German Government, having lately been informed of the proposed agreements of private firms, declares its readiness to give all possible support to these arrangements and to facilitate their being carried into effect."*

Tardily the Allied statesmen, realizing the danger that was facing them, prepared the Locarno Pact, under whose terms Germany joined with the principal Allies to guarantee the boundaries of western Europe and agreed to enter the League of

*League of Nations, *Treaty Series* 18-19, 1923, pp. 250-2.



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Nations. But it was not until December, 1925, that the Pact was signed, and then the damage to the Allied Cause was already done. The Near East was consolidated; the Far East had made its peace with the Soviet Government; Morocco and Syria were in revolt, and the economic disintegation of the British Empire had reached a very advanced stage.

## 16. The Strategic Position of the U.S.S.R.

Thus, by federation and by treaty agreement, the Soviet Union has established itself in a commanding position over the richest and most extensive land unit in the world. Its western boundary is the Baltic; its eastern, the Pacific. It includes half of Europe and a large portion of Asia. Across this whole strip of territory there are important mineral deposits and vast grain-raising areas. The Treaty of Rapallo places on the side of Russia the workshops of Germany. The Japanese Treaty provides at the eastern extremity of Eurasia the workshops of Japan.

Certain common interests hold this group of nations and peoples together. The Soviet Union, Persia, Afghanistan, China, and Turkey have a common interest in checkmating the capitalist imperialism of the great European powers. Japan is inseparably bound to the resources and markets of Asia; Germany must have raw materials and markets, both of which she can secure to a considerable extent in European Russia. While it would not be fair to say that the Eurasian economic and political unit now dominated by the Soviet Union is firmly united, it is true that the common economic and political interests of this unit are far greater than the common economic and political interests of the principal members of the League of Nations, or of any conceivable combination of capitalist imperialist states.

The developments in Asia during the last few years have brought the Soviet Union and the League of Nations into sharp conflict. The basis for Russia's power in Asia is very well stated by Albert Sarraut, French Ambassador to Turkey:

> "It is a mistake to regard Russia as being at the bottom of the present troubles in China and elsewhere in Asia—as if that were all there were of the question. Russia's aims, policies and tactics in the East are so well known that their effects ought not to be surprising; but merely to blame the Soviet



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Government shows a failure to recognize the underlying cause of the difficulty. It would be much more correct to say that Russia is at the top rather than at the bottom of the troubles in Asia.

"Russia is at the top not because she has shown greater skill in diplomacy; not because the diplomacy of Europe since the war has been so inferior in its dealings, but rather because the idea that the old diplomacy which had for its basic principle the exploitation of inferior peoples by European capitalists dominates the minds of a formidable opposition to European influence everywhere in Asia.

"This condition has created a new Asia, and the force of it grows apace. Bolshevist Russia was the first to recognize the potential value of this new state of the Asiatic mind and used such insight as a basis for rearing an Asiatic policy."*

## 17. The League of Nations versus the U.S.S.R.

One of the greatest peaceful campaigns of modern history is being waged by the U. S. S. R. for the economic and political consolidation of Eurasia. There is no other spot on the map where the material resources for such an organization exist in such abundance. Perhaps nowhere else in the world do the differences in language, customs, or religion present a more formidable obstacle to effective co-operation.

The Soviet Union has presented a simple formula to the Asiatic peoples: Co-operate and be free. Their only possible choice lay between this formula and the continued exploitation and oppression of Western imperialism.

Thus the Soviet Union rests its position on a new economic and political concept. The position of the European empires—of the League of Nations group — rests back upon capitalist imperialism. The great industrial nations of Europe are more or less directly connected with the League. They represent the highest achievements made by the business classes of the world up to the present time. Their social theories are premised on the continuance of exploitation. Imperialism is merely the application of these theories to their dealings with foreign peoples.

The League of capitalist empires speaks for that order of

*Authorized interview in New York *Times*, June 12, 1925.



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society which began its rise to power with the commercial and industrial revolutions. The U. S. S. R. speaks for an order of society which was born with the worldizing influences of modern economic life.

The League cannot speak with a voice of united authority. The division among capitalist nations is basic. The United States, never an official member of the League, is moving rapidly toward the position of financial dictator to Western Europe, and has already challenged Japan and Britain in its struggle for the resources and trade of Asia. Britain and France cannot agree on European Continental policy nor are they in harmony concerning the exploitation of Northern Africa and the Near East. Germany is under the constant pressure of French diplomacy.

While the constituent elements of the U. S. S. R. are less highly developed economically than the League of Nations group, they have a common purpose in their opposition to Western imperialism and a common ambition for the realization of a system of society that will eliminate exploitation and make the self-determination of peoples a reality.



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## Do not stop here. Read further!

Many readers will want to look more deeply into the questions touched upon in the preceding pages. Here are some suggestions:

A. L. P. DENNIS: *"The Foreign Policies of Soviet Russia,"* N.Y., Dutton, 1924, is the best general statement that has appeared concerning Russian political relations in Asia since the Revolution.

E. A. ROSS: *"The Russian Soviet Republic,"* N.Y., Century, 1923, contains valuable chapters on the struggle of Russia to secure a foothold in the Near and Far East.

S. A. KORFF: *"Russia in the Far East,"* American Journal of International Law, v. 17, p. 252, traces the economic and diplomatic progress of Russia across Northern Asia.

*"Soviet Russia"*

*"Russian Review"*

*"Russian Information and Review"* contain many valuable details concerning Soviet policies in Asia.

*Soviet Russia,* Report of the British Trade Union Delegation, 1924, contains a section on the relations between Russia and the Trans-Caucasian Republics.

MACMURRAY: *"Treaties and Agreements With and Concerning China,"* contains a complete collection of the treaties made by imperialist powers in their efforts to secure a dominant position in China.

T. W. OVERLACH: *"Foreign and Financial Control in China,"* N.Y., Macmillan, 1919, outlines activities of the imperialist nations in China and the manner in which they have despoiled her of her economic resources.

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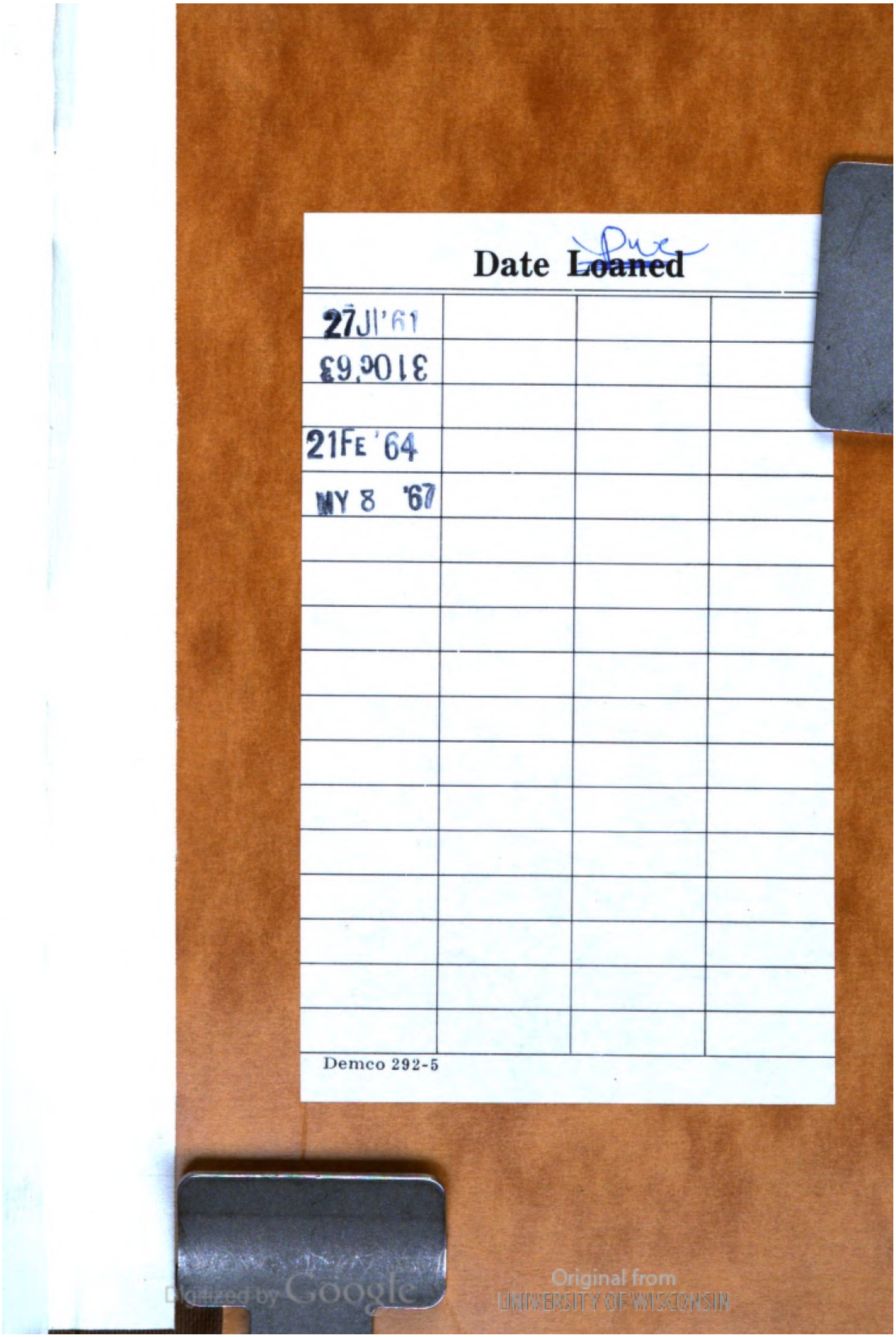


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